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ABSTRACT

These guidelines for the Vermont Regional Community College Commission attempt to answer the following questions: (1) Who are the students to be attracted and served? (2) What kind of services are to be provided? (3) In what ways can these services best be developed? (4) What kind of resources and staff development are needed for the job? and (5) How will one know whether the established goals have been fulfilled? Planning steps for the college trimester included: (1) those steps related to the setting of objectives, and (2) those concerned with designing operations to achieve objectives. Regional site planning included the following areas of activity: setting priorities, setting specific objectives, the student support system, the teacher support system, management, and staff development. (CK)

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G U I D E L I N E S

F O R

Vermont Regional Community College Commission

R E G I O N A L S I T E P L A N N I N G

Prepared By:

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VRCCC

March 15, 1972

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Introduction

The Guidelines for Regional Site Planning represents a modest attempt to come to grips with a number of questions which underlie any effort the VRCCC makes to grapple with the difficulties and complexities of its mandate.

I would list these questions as follows:

1. Who are the students that we want to attract and serve?
2. What kind of services do we want to be good at in providing to students?
3. What are the ways by which we can best develop and provide these services?
4. What kind of resources and staff development do we need to do the job?
5. How will we know whether or not we have done the job we have set out to do?

These questions will always nag us. They will always persist to work their way into our thinking. Our planning process is an attempt to respond to these questions with planned action at a given point of time.

I hope that these Guidelines will provide us with a "unity of process" by which we attempt to answer these questions and to satisfy the objectives of our organization.

Provisional Planning Process for Regional Site Planning
(To be revised & rewritten in June, 1972)

Planning Steps

In this section, I have attempted to describe the various planning steps which I have worked out with Regional Sites to help them begin a process of Regional Site Planning. These particular steps fall into a short-term planning time-frame limited to a trimester cycle of about four months. The trimester cycle includes the trimester during which the courses of instruction are offered, and also includes the period before such a trimester when students are contacted and recruited and when courses and programs are being developed.

I deliberately chose to begin my planning efforts at VRCCC at the Regional Site level (and not at the Central Office level) within a short-term time-frame because the most immediate problems confronted by VRCCC at the time of my appointment involved operational development at the field level and it seemed to me that these most immediate problems were also the most important. Unless an attempt to plan field operations was made in the very beginning, there not only would be very little on which to build, but it would become increasingly more difficult to introduce planning as time went on.

I also found that it would be much harder, and would require more experience with the Commission to be able to help in long-range planning at the Central Office level. Only now am I in a position where I might

be able to make a contribution at this level with the long-term (one or more years) in mind.

These planning steps are designed to help "operational planning"; that is, the planning of Regional Site objectives and how to design activities to help achieve objectives.

The process of planning as described here began in the summer of 1971 and ended temporarily in late December, 1971. I helped Regional Sites plan for the February - May trimester. Not all of the planning steps have been fully developed or implemented. Those that are not so developed will be indicated in the text. Copies of Regional Site plans appear in Appendix A. These planning steps are provisional, and I intend to encourage Regional Site staffs to help me modify and change these planning steps so that our final draft might be based on the realism of their needs and grounded in the reality of their experience gained during this winter trimester when the initial plans are implemented and in operation.

In March, 1972, we will resume our planning efforts. The time between December and March was used to implement plans developed thus far in our first "planned" trimester cycle.

Organization of the Planning Steps

The planning steps are divided into two general parts: (1) those steps which have to do with the setting of objectives or desired outcomes, and (2) those steps which have to do with the designing of operations or means by which objectives

and outcomes are achieved. Section I and II are the "objective" steps, and Section III - VI are the operational or "means" steps.

The steps are arranged not only by distinct organizational function and by time sequence, but also by level of specificity For example, the Objectives Planning Steps are arranged so that the planner moves from the general and abstract to the specific and concrete. There are dozens of terms which could be applied in describing these Planning Steps - the literature is full of the terms designated by one or another expert. What I have done in choosing terms, was to choose terms which I felt would be most natural and comfortable for the people with whom I work and which were consistently used throughout our planning work.

Decision Rules for Planning

Obviously planning involves making choices, and choices are made consciously or not within a set of rules and biases that one who makes the choices has. The most difficult aspect of designing a planning process to be utilized by Regional Site staff is to identify and articulate the obvious and the not so obvious baises and rules which should or should not affect the making of a decision or choice. In many cases the rules for making a decision have to be made by the Regional Sites themselves. In such cases I am primarily interested in what the rules are and whether or not they make sense to the Regional Site staff themselves and in regard to our Commission policies as well.

Some decision "rules" have been given to us by our grant and by our Commission corporation members in the form of obligations and policies. In such a case I have tried to encourage that these rules be followed. For example, when a Regional Site chooses the student target populations that it will attempt to enroll in VRCCC it will have to take into account the decision "rule" policy (which comes from our Grant) that highest priority goes to people who are in the poor or disadvantaged economic conditions.

In this outline of planning steps I have included certain important decisions rules which we have thus far followed, or which I suggest we consider. Other decision rules are still being worked out. Where a decision rule is not directly or indirectly prescribed by a Commission policy or grant obligation, I have tried to encourage Regional Site staffs to design their own decision rules. At the very least, I think we need to be aware of what decision rules were followed in reaching a planning decision.

It is very much in the nature of a Regional Site staff to resist an attempt to design a rational system for making planning decisions, due to the daily pressure to focus on daily problems, but I have found that once this process has begun it can gather a momentum of its own and the staff can begin to believe more and more in the value of such an effort.

Information System for Planning

Good information is essential if good planning decisions are to be made. For this reason, an

Information System for Regional Site Planning must take a front and center priority for further development if we are ever to operate with credibility to ourselves, our objectives, and to the public. Utilizing good information in planning is the equivalent to "doing our homework" before a planning decision is made.

I started to design an Information System in the summer, 1971, in order to provide Regional Site staffs with some information base for implementing the first two planning steps (which were implemented in January and February). However, the completion of the Information System will take a great deal more time, and it will be the responsibility of each Regional Site Co-ordinator to update and develop the Information System once it has been fully designed.

By summer, I hope to complete the development of a Planning Information System Index. I hope to develop a complete index system to be used along with the Planning Steps Guidelines. Then each planning step can be keyed to the Information System Index. The Information System Index would describe the relevant pieces of information and where they can be located for use in planning.

The Information System Index numbers are not provided in this Report (though space is provided for them), but will be added when the Information System is fully designed - hopefully by June, 1972.

Delegation of Responsibility

These Planning Steps do not include guidelines covering the management by which plans are designed

and implemented, since the development of this management system is, in fact, an objective of the planning step (V). However, in order to begin the process of plan design and plan implementation, the Regional Site Co-ordinator should delegate responsibility for planning design and implementation to specific staff members. Part of the job specifications and job contracts could be in the form of assigned responsibility for each planning step.

The names of the staff member responsible for each step of the plan should be clearly listed along with the plans themselves.

OUTLINE OF STEPS FOR REGIONAL SITE PLANNING

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PLANNING STEPS

I. Setting Priorities

Setting priorities is a process of decision-making by a Regional Site staff in which the staff choose from among many alternatives a limited set of operational goals which that Site will attempt to achieve during the planning period or trimester cycle. At the priority-setting level of planning, these general goals need not be specified in measureable or observable terms. They merely need to be identified, defined, and selected as priorities.

The general operational goals fall within four planning categories:

1. Outreach, recruitment, and enrollment of special student target populations.
2. Geographic location of VRCCC offices and manpower.
3. Development of educational program areas.
4. Development of individual and group organizational skills and capabilities for performance.

The guiding policy or decision rules for setting priorities include the following:

1. Follow Grant Obligations and Commission policy interpretations of Grant obligations.
2. Follow Commission policies and Director's policies.
3. Take into account VRCCC capabilities - its strengths and weaknesses.
4. Utilize the best information available to determine priorities consistent with Grant obligations and Commission policies. Decisions must be documented utilizing appropriate information and research.

Other decision rules are described where appropriate under the specific priority catagory in this planning step.

A. Setting Priorities: Student Target Populations

Student target populations include groups of students to whom the VRCCC Regional Site staff assigns highest priority for its deliberate efforts at outreach, recruitment, councelling, and enrollment of students. At this level of planning the potential student target populations are identified and priority is assigned.

Decision Rules: 1) Regional Sites in setting priorities must follow Grant Obligations and Commission Policies which state that VRCCC is to serve 50% disadvantaged people. 2) Regional Site must give priority to (a) continuing students (b) previous student applicants, (c) ABE graduates, and (d) students under contract. 3) Regional Sites must have a policy as to whether or not students who have other educational services available to them are to be included in the priority student target population.[1]

The Information System must be used in making any decision in regard to the selection of student target populations.

B. Setting Priorities: Geographic Location Commitments

Geographic location priorities include areas and towns where regional staffs decide to locate offices and the allocation of staff time. Geographic locations are selected on the basis of where the student target populations are

[1] See Footnote on Page 15 which is a vital extension of this section on Student Target Populations.

located, where the greatest educational needs are determined, and where it is possible to gain necessary in-kind community services.

Information System: _____ (Information System Index numbers will go here eventually)

C. Setting Priorities: Educational Program Priorities

A program is a general area of study made up of the individual courses in that program, such as a major academic discipline or professional skill area. The initiative for designing a program can come from the Central Office or the Regional Site. While much discussion has been given to how a program priority is to be determined, we are still far from having developed a clear decision-making process for determining program priorities. We usually undertake some form of a need or demand survey, but we have no criteria by which a survey of one general field of study is undertaken over another field of study. Nor do we have a criteria by which an adequate needs and demand survey is to be undertaken, though we have attempted at least one such survey in the Health Occupations field which was investigated in some depth. I would hope that in the next six months we would be able to develop a process by which to determine program priorities.

In terms of the general thrust of our educational programming, we need to set priorities from among these program catagories: (1) academic program - for college transfer credits and degrees ,(2) career programs -employable skill training,,(3) literacy programs- basic literacy skills, and (4) recreational programs.

The VRCCC has not developed a policy regarding educational programming as it should relate to the manpower and employment picture in Vermont or elsewhere. It has been argued in a number of passing remarks made in VRCCC educational programming discussions that the VRCCC is not an "employment agency" or essentially a manpower training agency, and I would agree with this position. However, we cannot help to serve this function to some extent whether or not we deliberately set out to do so. Educational institutions including graduate professional schools have traditionally divorced themselves from the world's or neighborhood's reality of how people actually make a livelihood. It may not be wise to perpetuate this traditional attitude when it comes to taking into account or ignoring manpower and occupational forcasting information in setting educational programming priorities, especially since it is possible to take such variables into account. I am not suggesting, however, that the VRCCC become an employment agency or the manpower training agency; what I am suggesting is that the VRCCC discuss this whole issue and come up with a clear policy which defines our role in regard to this issue.

The VRCCC has not developed a policy regarding educational programming which is integrated into larger than exclusively educational problem-solving contexts. For example, the conditions of poor housing, poor health, poor employment, poor education, and powerlessness contribute to the whole syndrome of the

condition we so loosely call poverty. The input of education itself may not be enough to make any difference to poor people who simply take courses from us, but it is possible to plan with other agencies and community resources a program around which the whole syndrome ofpoverty is attacked simultaneously rather than isolating the small pieces of the problem and attacking, for example, only the educational problem or the health problem in isolation from each other. The role of the VRCCC could be to plan and deliver services consistant with the over-all project strategy of multi-input effort. The housing shortage problem presents us with a more specific case in point in which a multi-input effort might prove useful. Training people to build their own homes not only provides people with training for making a living, but helps solve their own housing problem as well as improve the environment and property tax base.

This sort of approach and this sort of planning is feasible, but requires a great deal more advance planning and organizing. This sort of planning makes more sense to the planner because the planner is interested in taking into account as many of the relevant change variables as possible when engaged in his problem-solving and planning work.

This type of planning and programming has not been discussed at VRCCC because it has been pre-mature to do so, but the approach will be open to us as an option, and I hope we will have the opportunity to discuss it eventually.

D. Setting Priorities: Organizational Development Priorities

In addition to developing an effective "external" operation in the field, the VRCCC Regional Sites are attempting during the planning phases of our grant to develop an effective "internal" operation as well. By "internal" I refer to development of organizational capabilities to perform as a competent institution. Of course, the development of "internal" skills and capabilities is necessary if "external" or field operations are going to be successful. We need staff and we need an organization which can do the things that our special form of a non-campus open community college needs to do. Both our Grant and our mandate from the Governor requires us to develop our "internal" operations.

Setting organizational development priorities involves the identification of organizational problems, and the organizational capabilities that we are seeking to solve our present problems and achieve VRCCC objectives.

After many discussions and meetings both at the Central Office and at Regional Sites, a number of general organizational objectives have been generated which the staff want very much to work on. These are as follows: To plan for and implement (1) a counselling system, (2) teacher and student support systems, (3) the learning system, (4) processes for planning and management, (5) staff development. Other objectives are specified by each Regional Site.

Decision Rules: At least part of the priority-setting process should include (1) the use of the in-process and termination evaluation information which is completed by previous teachers and students who rate various aspects of their VRCCC experience, and (2) Regional Site staff self-evaluation. These evaluations may be able to help regional site staffs identify areas for organizational development.

Information System: _____

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[1] See page 10. In addition to distinguishing our potential student "target populations" in terms of economic and educational resources and attainment, we may want to further distinguish students in terms of their personal "approach to learning."

I number of recent studies have brought to light that it would be useful to distinguish between students who are "traditional" - are comfortable in conventional school environments and share academic values, and "non-traditional" students who seek other ways to learn and have more career-vocational skill goals. Furthermore even dropouts can be distinguished between those who dropped out because they could not tolerate "traditional" schooling, and those that dropped out because they had to, but who did not necessarily object to traditional learning environments.

Perhaps, we should (1) consider the types of students we want to go after in terms of "approach to learning," (2) consider the type of programs and learning environment we need to build taking into account the economic, educational attainment, and "approadh to learning" charateristics of our students, and (3) build a student support system which take these factors in account.

It is too early to suggest policy, but I would suggest we examine more closely what are referred to in Beyond the Open Door as the "New Students."

II. Setting Specific Objectives

Setting specific objectives involves a process of translating planning priorities into specific concrete and measureable Regional Site objectives. An "objective" in this sense means the desired "outcome" or "result" of Regional Site activities at the end of any given planning period. It is crucial to objective-writing that specific objectives be written in concrete and observable terms so that effective operations planning, management, and evaluation can take place. In this way the regional site manager can always relate the activity in his Regional Site with the objectives in that Site. In short, if objectives are not specific the planning process will have no meaning for anyone in VRCCC.

A. Setting Specific Objectives: Student Target Populations

Specific student target population objectives are determined by Regional Site staffs who translate the target population priorities into specific numbers of students which the Regional Site staff will deliberately attempt to contact, counsel, enroll, and support. In defining the target population objectives, the Regional Site has the option to specify a level of performance in a course, or a rate of completion of a course for a specific target population when it seems to be an important component of the desired outcome of the objective.

Decision Rules: In translating target population priorities into specific numbers, regional site staffs will have to take into account (a) their manpower capability to implement outreach and enrollment programs for each target population, (b) their own special skill capability to deal with certain target populations, (c) the program capability of the VRCCC to relate to target populations, and (d) whether or not students have alternative educational opportunities with other agencies and educational institutions.

The decision rules that have guided the planning decisions should be listed along with the student target population objectives themselves.

Information System: _____

B. Objective Setting: Geographic Location Commitments

In this planning step the Regional Site staff (1) determines specific locations in which to operate programs for the target population, (2) allocates staff time to each geographic location, and (3) decides whether or not it will operate part-time or full-time in each chosen location. Time is allocated in specific terms by specifying the percentage of time each staff member will actually be present in each geographic location.

This planning step is intended to try to help the Regional Site staff to organize itself around specific time commitments

(which, of course, reflect a site or an individual's own priorities, conscious or otherwise), and help a Site figure out just what its human manpower resources are. As a result of this planning step, it is possible to further refine the priorities and enhance individual staff awareness of just what a priority means in the personal terms of their own working time.

Decision Rules: The time commitments should reflect the original priorities assigned to each geographic location. At this point in the decision-making, staff members should know or be able to determine quickly whether or not adequate community resources will be available in each intended geographic area - especially in those areas in which highest priority is assigned.

The information System is very useful in this step. It can help the Regional Site determine areas of relatively high need in comparison with other areas in the same region. In order to rationalize decision-making in this step (the rationality is always balanced with political and other considerations, of course), it is possible to rank the areas in a region according to the greatest need of each target population in order to identify the area in which the target populations are most concentrated, or where community problems in regard to educational problems are the greatest. For example, if student drop-outs from high school make up a student target population, it is possible to find out in what geographic areas drop-outs are a most serious problem by consulting the Information System Chart on

high school drop-outs. This chart gives each school's and area's percentage or rate of drop-outs. This would also assume that the community chosen for VRCCC outreach efforts is co-operative and there are resources available to do the job.

Information System: _____

C. Setting Objectives: Educational Program Objectives

As discussed in the planning steps governing priority setting, the VRCCC has not had sufficient time and experience to work out a rational set of guidelines for selecting program priorities from among the many possible educational program alternatives. Nor has it had time to consider a process of complex, multi-agency program planning to attack some of the deeper and related problems associated with poverty and educational deficiency.

However, in so far as the setting of specific program and course objectives is concerned, the VRCCC has developed a rigorous and sophisticated process for setting these objectives. Each educational program and course must be translated into specific program and course objectives. This process is described in the VRCCC Handbook For Course Planning and Evaluation, and has just been completed for us by a group of outside consultants. The staff has been introduced to the mechanics of this planning process in a two day workshop. The essence of the Handbook is that programs and their deriv courses are translated into objectives in concrete and measurable terms.

The need for further planning on this planning step still exists. First, the process by which programs are initiated and validated needs to be further worked out. At present every program must be "authorized" by a State Advisory Council which the VRCCC appoints. The State Advisory Councils (SAC) are comprised of three members who are recognized teachers in the particular program area, three recognized professional practitioners in the field, and three students enrolled in the field. The SACs set guidelines which specify the requisite curriculum content of a program. Courses which are derived from a Program then are developed which are consistent with the SAC Program guidelines. The Handbook defines the form in which the programs and courses are specified.

It is likely that the Central Office will be planning the process by which SACs are brought into the program-planning activity utilizing the Handbook.

Second, the Regional Site staffs have to plan just what their specific course planning process will look like. The Handbook is but a guideline, and Regional Sites have some freedom as to how they will interpret these guidelines. It is a task of the Regional Sites to plan just what form their own course planning will take and it is hoped that this will be accomplished in the next few months with the aide of John Chater who heads the Central Offices Special Projects team.

Information System: _____

D. Objective Setting: Organizational Development

Organizational development objectives setting is a planning step in which Regional Site staffs translate their priorities for organizational development into specific, observable, operational terms. That is to say, Regional Site staffs translate priorities into objectives which are in the form of skills and organizational capabilities that they wish to see operating in their Site. For example, if an organizational development priority is to develop a student support system the concurrent specific objective could be for the staff to develop and implement a student support system which will be rated high by the students themselves.

Organizational development objectives should be in the form of the specific set of operations in which the organization gains capability as the outcome or result of the development period within the scope of the plan. Organizational objectives (desired outcomes) should be defined and be specific enough so that the Regional Site Staff can evaluate their progress towards meeting those objectives.

Decision Rules: The Regional Site staffs should in group discussion evaluate themselves and their own regional organization in terms of its present capability to support teachers and students, provide counselling, plan and manage, and other functions necessary to the effective operation of the Site. Then the Site should identify those operational functions which seem to be

deficient and identify a solution or "organizational development objective" which might repair the deficiency. In later planning steps the Regional Site staff will have the opportunity to work out means by which their organizational objectives can be achieved.

The planning steps that follow are designed to attempt to help guide the planning of operations necessary to achieve the planning objectives.

III. Student Support System

The most complicated operational pattern to design is that of VRCCC's student support system. We have, in recent months, begun to give serious discussion to this task. We are still engaged in discussion over just what components a good student support system should include. The design of such a system involves almost every staff member. I have helped our staff engage in discussion over system design and will continue to do so until we have a clear idea as to the kind of system we feel necessary to design. My role, then, is to insist and assist on the design of a student support system, but not to arbitrarily determine the design of that system.

Thus far, we have identified the following components of a student support system: (1) Outreach, (2) Educational Counselling, and (3) Logistical Support.

The task in the next few months will be to complete the identification of the student support system components, and to develop the plan for operationalizing the system. The time-frame for each of the components lies within each trimester cycle, but it is divided into three time phases: pre-enrollment, period before enrolling in a course; in-course, during which a student is enrolled in a course; and post-enrollment, after a student has completed a course.

Information System: The information system for the student support system is crucial to the development of the Student

Support System itself. In fact, much of the Student Support System that is "support" is information that a student may want or need. However, a formal information collection and retrieval system for student support has not been developed and it is one of the major tasks before us.

A. Student Support System: Outreach

The Outreach planning step involves designing plans for making initial contact with students in the target populations for the purposes of recruitment and enrollment in VRCCC courses and programs (courses that already exist or in new courses to be developed with the students themselves).

Outreach is a vital function of the Regional Site as it is a set of activities which enables VRCCC to reach traditionally hard-to-reach potential students who might otherwise not take the initiative for one reason or another to enroll in VRCCC courses and programs. Without an outreach effort made by VRCCC or on behalf of VRCCC it is probable that we would not be able to satisfy our grant mandate and target population priorities.

A policy guiding VRCCC method of developing outreach capability is still not fully developed. The VRCCC has thus far depended on its counsellor staff to design and implement outreach programs, but recently we have talked about the need to bring in community poverty agencies such as the CAP agency to make the

outreach efforts for us or at least to make referrals to us. Whether or not we are able to rely on local community agencies for student outreach programs, VRCCC will still be responsible for (1) choosing student target populations and (2) designing the overall strategy for outreach utilizing to a lesser or greater degree other friendly agencies as our outreach agents.

Information System: Outreach with potential students includes the planning of the strategy or method for making contact with students who fall within the Regional Site target populations. The Regional Site staff identifies the kind of information needed to locate such potential students as well as the source of such information. In designing the outreach strategy, the Regional Site staff may decide to utilize individual and institutional help. A local poverty agency, a church, or ethnic organization may be recruited to help in the outreach effort.

B. Student Support System: Educational Counselling

The planning of an educational counselling component of the Student Support System involves counselling services at the point that a student is contacted in an outreach effort and includes sustaining educational counselling during the period of time that the student has any association with the VRCCC. Our Director of Counselling will be helping our Regional Site counsellors design the educational counselling system.

No doubt that the process of planning such a system will include identification of (1) information on educational options available to students, (2) counsellor and counsellor aide skill and training needs, and (3) the method for providing both student counselling and counsellor skill training during pre-enrollment, in-course, and post-course phases.

Some of the student needs have already been identified in discussions. These include (1) help in choosing a course or program, and help in writing instructional objectives with a teacher, (2) help in choosing the appropriate learning path to achieve an occupational or other objective, (3) help a student identify and utilize local community resources, and (4) develop "student appeal process" to work out conflicts resulting from teacher evaluation of student.

The Information System for counsellors has not been developed in any formal sense, and it will be the task of the next six months to design an Information System related to educational counselling activities.

C. Student Support System: Logistical Support

Logistical support planning involves the planning of support for students which is not directly educational in nature, but nonetheless is a necessary form of support if a student is to succeed in VRCCC courses. Such non-educational or logistical support includes support that

might help to knock down non-educational barriers that prevent a student from enrolling or attending a VRCCC class. Day care services, transportation facilities, health services, etc. are all forms of logistical support which a student may need.

Counsellors may wish to set up a system of referral in which students requiring one or another forms of logistical support would be referred to agencies or services which can provide the necessary support, and in the planning of class locations a Regional Site will have to take into account a student's need for logistical support.

The planning process for developing a logistical support system involves the following steps: (1) identification of logistical or non-educational barriers that prevent students from enrolling in courses, (2) the possible solutions for overcoming such barriers, and (3) the means by which solutions for overcoming barriers can be developed.

Information System: An initial start has been made in setting up an Information System for logistical student support planning. We have begun a collection of general information on just what barriers confront potential students. This part of the information system needs to be expanded. Also, we need to systematically determine what individual student problems are in regard to barriers they have. It might also be a good idea to make a study to find out from a surveyed community just what the problems of its citizens are in regard to barriers discouraging them from gaining educational experiences.

IV. Teacher Support System

The planning of a system of support for VRCCC teachers in each Regional Site involves the designing of at least the following components: (1) a process of disseminating to teachers VRCCC objectives, administrative procedures and mutual obligations, (2) a curriculum development process and system of evaluating courses, (3) role of the State Advisory Counsils, (4) VRCCC staff development to help teachers, and (5) information for teachers on student needs, profiles, and performance.

The VRCCC has spent a good deal of time and energy in the last six months discussing the need for and requisites of a good teacher support system. As of now we do not have a systematic process by which teachers are supported in a variety of needs that they might have. But we have worked out the framework for designing such a teacher support system.

The framework we have developed covers a time-frame of three phases in which inputs can be made: (1) "pre-service" - prior to the beginning of teaching by the teacher, (2) "in-service" - during the time when a teacher is actually teaching, and (3) "post-service" - following the completion of teaching a specific course and during the course evaluation period.

The planning process for designing a Teacher Support System requires Regional Sites to build each component of the system around the following planning steps:

1. Determine what teachers need to know in regard to each support component.

2. Determine how to provide what teachers need to know.

3. Specify who will be responsible for providing what teachers need to know.

A. Teacher Support System: Students

Students are the reason for teachers. Beyond knowing about learning, teaching, and subject matter, teachers may need to know something about their students as a group, or as a cluster of individuals sharing common problems, or as individuals with individual and special problems.

Planning the "student" component of the Teacher Support System should include the design of a process by which teachers are informed about their students and just how the characteristics of their students might affect teaching strategies or relative classroom failure and success. The VRCCC has a mandate to reach a majority of students who are from poor and poorly educated backgrounds. If we are responsible to the needs of our students we must take into account in the classroom the special problems that our students bring with them to the classroom that might affect their experience with us. We need to be aware about these problems, but we also need to plan a strategy so that teachers are equipped to respond to the various and special needs of students.

B. Teacher Support System: Curriculum Development Process

The planning of this teacher support component includes planning for the support of teachers in the following areas:

1. Learning Processes: providing background to teachers on alternative learning environments and different ways in which students can learn.

2. Teaching Modes: methods of teaching which a teacher can utilize in a course.

3. Curriculum and Materials Resources: providing teachers with accessibility to curriculum materials that they might be able to use in a course. This also includes various teaching aides such as audio-visual materials.

4. "Course Planning and Evaluation Handbook": training in the process of writing course objectives and of implementing a course evaluation. This also includes designing various routines by which students make input into course planning and objectives writing as well as evaluation.

The Course Planning and Evaluation Handbook is the key process by which a course in VRCCC is planned, specified, and evaluated. This series of planning steps has been designed in detail by three outside consultants. However, it is very much a part of the Teacher Support planning step to design the means by which the course writing and evaluation process is to be integrated into Regional Site operations, and to design the alternative means by which students are included in the course writing and evaluation process. We are just beginning to implement this system and will be working on it with considerable energy during the next six months. John Chater of the Special Projects Team in the Central Office heads the Central Offices effort to provide Regional Site

staffs with technical support in planning the final design and use of the Handbook.

C. Teacher Support System: Role of the State Advisory Councils (SACs)

SAC are State Advisory Councils which are convened in order to design the guidelines or "parameters" around each learning or program area. A program area is usually an academic, vocational, or professional area of study.

A SAC is made up of three members each of recognized practitioners in the program area, recognized teacher and academics in the field, and three "consumers" or current students of the program area.

Regional Sites do not convene SACs; the Central Office does. However, this planning step involves designing the process by which a Regional Site can initiate a program area for which a SAC can be organized and convened. Planning should also include how the Central Office implements a new program to a Regional Site - a program which the Regional Site may not have initiated. At this moment programs are implemented without a clear definition of tasks between Central Office and Regional Site, and without a notion of co-ordinating the introduction of Programs and SAC guidelines into existing Regional Site trimester plans and schedules.

D. Teacher Support System: VRCCC Objectives and Administrative Procedures

Regional Site staffs need to plan ways of providing teachers with what they need to know about VRCCC policies, obligations, and administrative procedures and details. A teacher may need to know, for example, what arrangement she should make if he or she cannot make a class, or what our policies are in regard to attendance in classes, training, etc.

In discussions with two of the three Regional Site staffs on this teacher support component, one Site suggested preparing a handbook for teachers, and another Site suggested an orientation session when this information would be presented.

V. Management

The management planning step is concerned with designing the best system for over-seeing the execution, monitoring, and evaluation of Regional Site plans and projects. Over-all, management is the primary function of the Regional Site co-ordinator, but most Regional staff members, even if hired for a "technical" role rather than a "managerial" role, have to a degree some supervisory responsibility over specific Regional Site projects and support staff. However, it remains the responsibility of the Regional Site co-ordinator to identify responsibilities and delegate managerial or supervisory authority.

The management planning step includes the design of the following tools, processes, and components of a Regional Site management system:

A. Planning: the process of clarifying Regional Site objectives and method of achieving objectives in light of constraints and limited resources.

B. Budgeting: budgeting involves more than making an accounting of receipts and expenditures. Budgeting involves making allocation decisions on the basis of known costs for each function or service performed, estimated return or benefit for each allocation and on the basis of program and service priority.

C. Supervision and Control: the way in which a Regional Site and each component of a Regional Site will be run.

D. Operations: This includes the design of ways of performing Regional Site operations in a systematic and well-planned manner. We could call this planning step the planning for "operational systems". "Operations" are designed to achieve or "execute" planning objectives.

E. Scheduling: the planning of the time-frame and schedule by which a plan is executed in all its various parts and the stated objectives achieved.

F. Management Information System and Internal Communications: the over-all planning for the development and utilization of a Regional Site Information System that is designed to help to improve decisions which any potential user might have to make - including managers, counsellors, teachers, and students.

This planning step also includes the design of a reliable system of internal communication between central and regional offices, and between staff members in a Regional Site.

G. Review and Evaluation: this step includes the design of a system by which specific operational and educational objectives are evaluated in terms of actual performance so that a Regional Site can know just what it is or has accomplished and can make appropriate modifications of its programs.

A. Management: Planning

This Planning Step includes the whole process of developing a Regional Site Plan as outlined in this document of provisional Planning Steps. While it seems to be listed simply as one of many components of the planning effort, as the planning effort itself, it transcends the components and is involved with each component.

The distinct activity of this planning component is the development of a planning process for Regional Sites. The Regional Site Co-ordinator has the responsibility for learning and applying a process of planning in the development of his Regional Site. I have helped Co-ordinators make some initial, partial plans by applying the provisional planning process. I will continue to

develop the planning process with Co-ordinators as well as help them adapt the process of planning to their own particular Regional Site planning efforts.

I hope that Regional Site Co-ordinators, as part of the Staff Development Program (see Planning Step VI), will learn various planning approaches which they can then apply to small or large project design problems as well as other subsidiary activities of their Regional Site.

Planning capability is a necessary first step to any form of program and organizational development effort.

B. Management: Budgeting

Thus far, budgeting has been one of our most neglected variables of change in Regional Site operations. Our "line budgets" have been fixed and rigid. Regional Site co-ordinators have been presented with a budget which in turn dictated a staff and certain expenses, and that has been that.[1] Already co-ordinators ignore the usual job function that belong to the staff specified by the budget, because they have other ideas about the combination of staff functions to be performed. The co-ordinator's own staffing policies may be better (and they probably are), but it does make the budgeting design a useless tool for planning.

Our business manager has asked for information on expenditures and receipts, but this has been difficult to acquire because

[1] Co-ordinators have made changes in their budget, but they have not been able to use the budget as a tool for planning and development.

co-ordinators don't see much value to themselves in supplying this information. The information is not used, in turn, as feed-back to direct and modify Regional Site operations. In short, budgeting information doesn't seem to do Regional Site co-ordinators any good. Hence, budgeting has not been the flexible tool for the planner and manager that it should be.

What we should work for during the next year is to make budgeting this useful tool of planning and management. I recommend this set of budgeting decision rules:

> The Regional Site co-ordinator should design a budget to cover a period of a year which reflects and helps achieve Regional Site trimester cycle objectives. Budgeting should involve making decisions for allocating funds on the basis of known alternatives. Budgeting decisions take into account the following: (1) specific program and service objectives, (2) known costs for each service rendered and function performed (i.e. counselling, teaching support system, etc.), (3) knowledge of what combination of services and functions will achieve maximum performance results ("return on investment").

For example, if a trimester cycle objective is to enroll a certain number of low income people and to help them complete courses rather than dropping out, then we first need to know what services contribute the most to helping such students complete courses. If we learn that counselling or available transportation is the "key" to low income students completing courses, then our budget should reflect an allocation favoring counselling or some transportation program.

I have used only one example but there are many. We need to bring to consciousness and to a working level the dynamics of budgeting in our year and trimester cycle planning. We need to introduce some element of what is called the Planning, Programing and Budgeting System (PPBS).

The Central Office will generate some elementary cost information this spring, but an over all cost benefit analysis probably won't be performed until summer. In the mean time, the Regional Site co-ordinators should be prepared to help the Central Office acquire considerable cost information even though the "collection process" will seem at times inconvenient and impersonal. The Central Office and the Regional Site co-ordinators will also work on a system of regular feed back of budgeting information.

C. Management: Supervision and Control

Supervision and control includes the management of Regional Site staff and of Regional Site activities. VRCCC does not have a consciously designed management system at either the Central Office level or at the Regional Site level. In addition, VRCCC has not hired experienced managers for the Regional Site co-ordinator's position. At this point in time VRCCC has a very low management capability.

In the next year not only will Regional Site co-ordinators and their managerial assistants have to be trained as managers,

but a management system for each Regional Site will have to be planned and designed. In the spring of 1972 I will provide a course for VRCCC managerial staff which will include both planning and management training. My hope is that this formal "dose" of planning and management training will raise the over-all level of awareness of just how far we have to go in order to have an effective management team.

I hope to build a management team around the "Management by objectives" methodology and to build a "management information system" into the management system.

D. Management: Operations

Each Regional Site performs a great number of individual activities each day. Each activity, is, of course, an effort to be related to a Regional Site's planned development objectives. The aim of the operations planning step is to design ways by which functions and tasks can be performed in some systematic and inter-related way rather than by random, seat-of-the-pants, and personally improvised ways.

For example, each student and teacher must evaluate each other at the end of a course. There exists no regular, routine way or system for performing these evaluations. The Regional Site staff as part of its operations planning will have to devise a system or "routine" by which students and teachers perform their evaluations. Another example: VRCCC has no system for matching

student demands with available instructional resources. This process of "matching" will have to be thought out and built in as a "system" in a Regional Site operation.

Operating systems are the only means for performing reliable, regular, and easily manageable functions of the VRCCC.

E. Management: Scheduling

One of the planning tasks of Regional Sites is to schedule over the time-frame of a trimester all of the important phases, benchmarks, or "action steps" as they relate to achieving Regional Site objectives.

At this time no over-all VRCCC scheduling of target dates for meeting grant or other VRCCC objectives exists. I have helped Regional Sites work out some short-term schedules (flow-charts) tied to the trimester cycle, but Regional Site staffs still need more training to be able to perform scheduling tasks adequately.

Scheduling should prove helpful to every member of the Regional Site staff since a schedule can show (1) deadlines and starting dates for each action step, (2) the inter-relationship between one action step and another, (3) the proper sequence of an action step with another, and (4) the critical action step network or "paths" which may require more concentrated management and effort to complete.

Decision rules for a trimester cycle includes the following:

1. Identification of all major Action Steps requisite to the production of student attended programs and courses of instruction.

2. Ordering the Action Steps within a logical sequential network.

3. Scheduling the "sequential network" of Action Step "deadlines" within a time-frame of one trimester period. Thus scheduling the "starting" date of each Action Step.

4. Identification of Management implications of the "Schedule" (eg. factors such as lead-time, Critical Path Method, Co-ordination with Central Office, etc.)

5. Discussion of factors involved in Advanced Planning with a lead time of (a) one year, (b) two years.

I will provide additional scheduling training in the management course that I will teach this spring.

F. Management: Management Information System

The Management Information System is at the heart of any management system that VRCCC is able to develop. Each Regional Site uses a great deal of information for making decisions, supervising day-to-day operations, evaluating in-process activities or finished activities, and for making reviews and modifications of plans and operations.

The Management Information System planning step involves the planning and creation of an MIS which can help improve decisions by any potential user including managers, teachers, and students. It also includes the planning of a process by which information can be transmitted between and among office staff.

I have attempted to help Regional Sites gather and organize some of their information needs as they relate to planning. At this point in time we are able to make a number of good rational

decisions following the listed decision rules in the planning of priorities and objectives and the development of outreach programs. However, we have just begun to organize information for other aspects of planning, and of management and evaluation.

The approach to the planning of a Management Information System might be as follows:

1. The identification of general information needs of potential user, including managers, counsellors, teachers, students, Central Office personnel, and grant analyst.

2. Specifying of information needs of each potential user based on an analysis of the kind of decision-making and feed-back requirements of the user.

3. Determining where the information that is required is located and how it can be acquired.

4. Determining the frequency of information output, need for up-dating, and reliability of the information.

5. Designing the form that the information will take.

6. Where it will be stored and how it can be retrieved.

7. Who will be the information gatherer.

The VRCCC unconsciously uses and ignores a tremendous amount of useful information in each decision that a staff member makes. Unless we are able to build a good MIS, the Regional Sites cannot really operate effectively. For example, the VRCCC is by definition an institution which is supposed to utilize existing resources. That is, we not only use existing resources, but we are expert at knowing about existing resources. If we don't have a good information system/we won't know about or be able to transmit to

others what we know about existing resources. And in our weakness we will be undermining a major objective of the VRCCC.

I have included in the Appendix a copy of the index of our Information System as it relates to the first three planning steps (Priorities, Objectives, and Outreach).

G. Management: Evaluation

The evaluation planning step involves the planning of a system of trimester "in-process" and "terminal" evaluations of VRCCC performance in Regional Sites. Evaluation serves two general purposes: (1) it helps us stay on course and indicates needed changes and modifications of our plans and operations, and (2) it helps us test many of our underlying community college concepts.

In-process evaluation involves designing and integrating a system of evaluation which will provide feedback to Regional Site staff and Central Office staff who will need this information in order to make modifications of plans and operations during a trimester cycle (during "real time").

Terminal evaluations are implemented at the end of a trimester cycle or longer time-frame to test the conformity between actual outcomes of operations and the specified objectives of a Regional Site plan. We do this to make modifications of both the planning process and the operational system for the next trimester or longer planning period. Terminal evaluations can be used to test

the validity of specific concepts we employ, or specific strategies we are attempting to develop in order to meet general VRCCC goals.

The major tasks of designing a Regional Site Evaluation System include the following:

1. Identify specifically just what it is we want to evaluate or test.

2. Determine the criteria by which we can measure performance with plans, or concepts with reality. That is, we need to determine just what it is that we will be looking for in order to make an evaluation.

3. Translate "what we are looking for" into specific information that we will need to collect. Determine how we are going to collect that information.

4. Integrate Evaluation System information requirements into the operating structure of the Information System.

5. Determine how to integrate the Evaluation System into the Management System (developing an "interface") so that feedback of evaluative information gets to those on the staff who need to use the information to make proper changes and modifications of plans and operations.

We do not now have an over-all design for the Evaluation System, but we have begun to design some of the information components of the Evaluation System. I have helped design a Student Information questionaire which will tell us a great deal about whether or not we are doing an effective job of outreach and recruitment. A group of outside consultants have helped us develop a system of student evaluation in which students evaluate the services of Regional Sites. Neither of these components have been implemented though we expect to implement them this spring.

Beginning in May the entire staff will be involved in evaluation, so that the setting up of a structure for evaluation becomes more and more important. Evaluation is one of the biggest tasks ahead.

VI. Staff Development

Planning for Staff Development involves the translating of a Regional Site's organizational development objectives into specific skills that staff members will need to have in order to contribute to a level of organizational performance specified in the Regional Site's organizational development priorities and objectives.

The Governor's Executive Order #27 specifies that VRCCC staff should be trained to operate a community college effectively in Vermont. Hence staff development and training is one of the major objectives during VRCCC's grant period. In addition, we have some staff to whom we have contractual obligations to train on the job.

Staff development and training is not limited to Regional Site staff, but includes staff at all levels of the organization. VRCCC staff is primarily a "para-professional" staff, and staff training, then, is an essential requirement if VRCCC is to develop the professional excellence to fulfill its mission.

Within the "para-professional" description there are, perhaps, two distinct groups: middle-class para-professionals, and low income para-professionals. Many of the problems of each group are shared, but many are very different and require different forms of support. With the help of our Director of Counselling, Robert Fine, we may all become more aware of the problems of para-professionals and what we can do about them.

Fortunately, the summertime has been set for concentrated staff development. Also, a graduate doctoral program in higher education may be worked out with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I am not sure that a summer training session, however well planned, is likely to solve all of the problems of staff "under-development". But if the summer does not solve the problem there will be little chance following that summer to solve the problem because the VRCCC will become fully operational again and planning and development projects will be pre-empted by day-to-day operational problem-solving. Individual staff development goals could be in the same form as suggested by the Handbook for Course Objectives.

Decision rules: Staff development includes the development of all managers, counsellors, aides, and other support staff in the roles in which these staff serve. The process of planning for staff training and development could include the following steps:

1. Identify skill areas necessary to build organizational capability, and staff problems that need to be solved.
2. Determine means by which the individual skills can be learned, and problems solved.
3. Determine how to acquire the means by which staff can obtain necessary training and development.
4. Develop a policy on personnel promotion or consideration based on job performance and skill attainment.
5. Write specific job "contracts" with each staff member defining the job responsibilities, the job objectives, and the time-frame for meeting job objectives.

The current staff have really no notion as to where they can expect to be in the organization in the next few years or even the long-term. VRCCC is attempting to become a permanent part of the higher education system in Vermont, and yet its own staff can't feel that this is but a transient project rather than a life-long profession in which they are participating and for which they are developing themselves.

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